

Lifestyle Tradie

ISSUE #33

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12 QUESTIONS
TO A BETTER
LIFE!



ARE YOU READY FOR
ROBOTS TO TAKE OVER
YOUR JOB?

Ben Van Der Kooy Metropolis Plumbing and Gas

PLATINUM VIP MEMBER

*"Clear direction & improved systems has seen my
productivity go through the roof"*

 **Lifestyle Tradie**
the freedom to choose...



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Lifestyle Tradie Member Profile

"Clear direction & improved systems has seen my productivity go through the roof. We've improved cash flow by 438% and implemented upfront pricing and Xero to name a few."



Ben Van Der Kooy

*Metropolis Plumbing and Gas – Platinum VIP Member
Multi-Award Winning Plumbers
www.metropolisplumbingandgas.com.au*

1. Describe your business journey up until now, your family etc.

We are a multi-award plumbing company based in Perth with two tradesmen and an apprentice.

I have been married to my amazing wife Kylie for eight years and are blessed with three energetic boys; Samson (5), Hugo (3) and Archie (1). Kylie is not directly involved with the business but without her running the house and wisely spending our money, I wouldn't have the headspace to run the business like I do.

I have dyslexia so I struggled at school with reading and comprehension. I enrolled in a pre-apprenticeship course at T.A.F.E - I didn't want anyone saying that my dad just gave me a job. I topped the class for 2 semesters so I can't be all that bad!

At the end of our apprenticeship I finished my plumbing licence, had some business cards and invoice books printed and started my business at the age of 21.

Did I know much about running a business? Not really... A real estate agent that I was working for kindly pointed out that all my invoices didn't have invoice numbers on them. That's a good idea!

8 years ago Shaun started work as a mature age apprentice. I really enjoyed watching his skills improve every day.

Shaun had been with me for a couple of years when my sister moved back to Perth from Sydney. Not long after they started dating and before I knew it, he became my brother-in-law. Just for the record I chose Shaun first! Shaun and Kristy have a little boy called Maverick (1).

Shaun sees the big picture and embraces change. He is exceptionally good with our customers and that's why I refer to him as the "day maker" in the company.

Our new apprentice Synjon has a great attitude, is mature and passionate for the job. It won't be long until he too will be a 'day maker'.

We're multi-award winners having won '**Outstanding Customer Service**' Award from the Kalamunda Chamber of Commerce for the 2nd year in a row plus received a High Commendation for the CBUS 2013 Customer Service Award by the Master Plumbers Association of WA.



2. What's the biggest challenge you've faced in the last 12 months?

Trying to get the business to run more efficiently. Going paperless.

3. How have you tackled that challenge? How do you feel about it?

We've jumped from MYOB to Xero, which has been awesome. I can now reconcile in traffic (LTG joke, credit to Andrew from Everest Electrical)

4. How have you and your business changed since joining Lifestyle Tradie Group (LTG)? What difference has this had on your personal life?

Lifestyle Tradie has given me real direction.
I've **implemented an up-front pricing system** and a membership/loyalty program. Our **cash flow has improved immensely (by 438%)** now collecting money at the end of every job. This has reduced our outstanding invoices from \$60-\$70K to \$10-\$16K.

5. Where do you see your business in 5 years?

Totally paperless. An office in the backyard. Have a full WHS system in place. 2 more tradesmen/2 vans

and a full-time office manager.

6. What are the top 3 things you have learnt about business that you would recommend to others and WHY?

1. **Get invoice numbers printed on your invoice books** - It just helps you to keep track of all your invoices!
2. **Get help in your business early in your career.** Try and find a trade business coach who has 'done it all before' (preferably with a wife who is a marketing guru...)
3. **Dump 'time & materials' charging.** This made me twice as efficient, totally organised resulting in higher profit.

7. Favourite tool and why?

Ben: Jetter, camera and locator combination.
It's great to be able to show customers exactly what the problem is, where it is and provide a solution to fix it once and for all!

Kylie: Thermomix. Google it!

Shaun: B Press Crimper. It makes my job easier especially when the water mains don't shut off properly.

8. Tell us something quirky about yourself that your buddies don't know.

Ben: I like to eat all my chocolate and confectionery frozen.

Kylie: I sneeze every time I have a mint!

Shaun: I wish I was Superman.

9. Who would you most like to have lunch with and why?

Ben: George W Bush. I haven't got anything particular to ask him, but would like to have a chat about life!

Kylie: Rachel Jankovich. a blogger, writer and mother of 6 kids under the age of 9. She has the exact same humour as I do and I think we'd have a lot to talk about.

Shaun: Chester Williams. the first african to play for the Springboks, he is a christian and I would like to ask him how it felt to part of a changing nation.

